



The President's Daily Brief

26 December 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[REDACTED] General Giap's recent article on the war suggests that Hanoi will respond to the allied Vietnamization program by dragging out the fighting indefinitely. (Page 1)

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Moscow and Bonn [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] (Page 2)

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Bangkok is publicizing the possibility of a withdrawal of Thai troops from Vietnam. (Page 3)

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Cyprus. (Page 4)

Moscow has offered a \$30 million credit to Peru to finance the purchase of agricultural machinery. (Page 5)

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NORTH VIETNAM

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These are our preliminary thoughts about the long, theoretical article on the war written by North Vietnam's Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap. A more complete analysis will follow when we receive the full text.

The article is one of the clearest indications to date that Hanoi's principal response to the allied Vietnamization program will be to try to drag out the fighting indefinitely. Giap repeatedly stresses the need for the Communists to preserve and to build up their forces, to safeguard and to expand base areas, and to be in a position to take advantage of whatever opportunities may come their way in the course of further protracted warfare. Giap calls for strong military action, of course, but his stress on fundamentals and on adequate preparations suggests that Hanoi believes that much more spadework is needed before the Communists will be ready to attempt another head-on military challenge.

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Enemy violations of the 24 hour allied truce did not involve any major combat activity.

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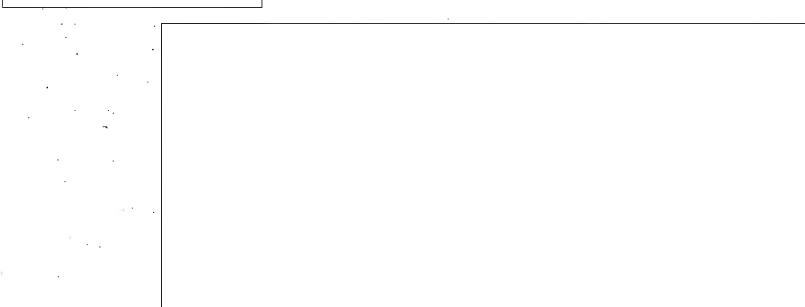
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USSR - WEST GERMANY



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THAILAND-US

There appears to be less than meets the eye in recent reports that Thailand is considering withdrawing some of its troops from South Vietnam. Both Deputy Prime Minister Praphat and Foreign Minister Thanat have given private assurances to Ambassador Unger that their government fully appreciates the need for Thailand to keep troops in Vietnam for the time being. They claim there is no plan for withdrawal.

Thanat recently implied to Unger, however, that the Thai believe they are obliged to portray their participation in the Vietnam war as being in step with allied policies. He claimed that his intention in raising the possibility of a troop withdrawal was to reaffirm the temporary nature of the Thai presence in Vietnam and to underline Thai confidence in the Vietnamization program. Thanat discussed the possible withdrawal of Thai forces with Saigon's ambassador yesterday, according to the Bangkok press.

Thanat announced to the press earlier this week that during the recent ASEAN meeting in Kuala Lumpur he had brought up the possibility of pulling out troops with South Vietnam's Foreign Minister Lam. A few days earlier, a group of Thai legislators, seemingly with the blessing of at least some government leaders, sent an open letter to Prime Minister Thanom calling for withdrawal of the Thai troops.

In the light of Thailand's growing dissatisfaction with the US on other matters, the manner in which the Thai have raised the troop issue--direct discussions with Saigon and in the press--may be designed in part as a not so subtle reminder to Washington of the importance Bangkok attaches to being involved in decision making on matters of mutual interest.

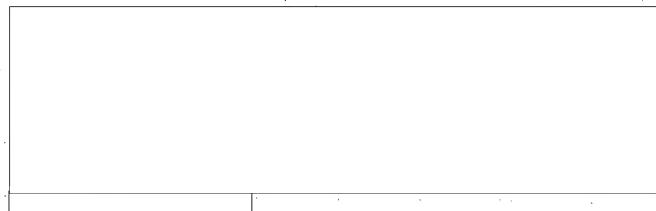
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USSR-PERU

Moscow has offered a \$30 million credit to Peru to finance the purchase of agricultural machinery. The credit--Russia's first to Peru--was announced by Peru's Foreign Minister Mercado on 20 December and confirmed by the Soviet commercial attaché.

Repayment terms probably will be typical of Soviet trade credits--10 years or less--rather than the extension of long-term aid.

The sale of Western equipment to private farmers could be hurt by the Soviet credit offer. In the past, however, the poor quality of Soviet machinery and lack of service eventually led other Latin American countries back to traditional US and West European suppliers.

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